



### Customer Focus

*A down payment on the future of agriculture is made each time NRCS' Farmland Protection Program is used in Vermont to purchase development rights, helping keep productive farmland in use. According to Vermont State Conservationist Fran Keeler, Vermont farms are in danger of becoming subdivisions as towns grow into cities and sprawl in neighboring areas. "This program helps preserve some of the State's most vulnerable farmland and ensures that the farming community - the very essence of Vermont - remains intact." Once developed, productive farmland is lost forever, placing food security for the Nation at risk. The Farmland Protection Program seeks to protect farmland in the national interest and state interest.*

*The Raymond Van der Wey farm in Ferrisburgh, Vermont was just the kind of farm for which this program was designed. It is neat, well-run and successful; the next generation wants to keep it going. It is one of 11 farms in close proximity that was protected around the bustling little city of Vergennes.*

*Ray and his family farm 328 acres; milk 185 cows; and raise 160 heifers. Annually, they grow 150 acres of corn silage and 280 acres of mixed hay/haylage. Over the years, the Van der Weys have invested in conservation and water quality projects. Under the Lower Otter Dead Creek PL-566 watershed program they installed a manure holding pond and milkhouse waste system. More recently, a slotted floor freestall barn used to house the milk cows was erected. They also retrofitted the original stanchion barn and installed a flat parlor installed to decrease the time spent milking.*

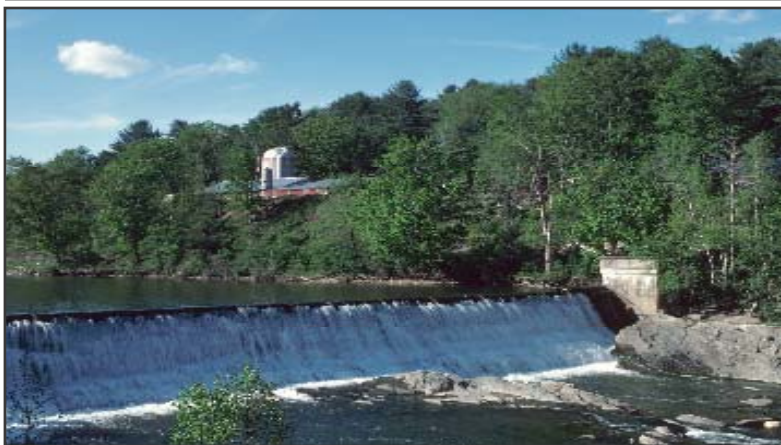
*Van der Wey, a native of Holland, sold the development rights because "we had no intentions of getting out of farming" and needed cash to make improvements. "I like farming," he said.*

## Farmland Protection Program Vermont Summary

**Overview** The USDA Farmland Protection Program (FPP) helps farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. The program assists States, Tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations by purchasing conservation easements for the purpose of limiting conversion to non-agricultural uses. NRCS provides up to 50% of the fair market value of the conservation easement to the cooperating entity, which acquires, manages, and enforces the easement. Landowners participate voluntarily, and protected farms remain in private ownership. Every protected farm operates under a conservation plan approved by the local Conservation District. Nationally, over \$52 million have been obligated to state and local entities since establishment of the program in 1996. Proposals were accepted in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2001.

**Accomplishments** Since 1996, Vermont has acquired and permanently protected 64 farms, totaling over 21,000 acres, with a total easement cost of \$15.2 million. FPP has helped bring new vitality to agriculture in Vermont. Not only has FPP enabled established farmers to make new investment in land, barns and other infrastructure, but it has given the next generation of operators more affordable access to farm ownership. In Fiscal Year 2001, Vermont was awarded \$3,318,700 for its Farmland Protection Program. These funds will be used to purchase up to 50% of the fair market value of permanent easements on about 50 Vermont farms. It is estimated that more than 10,000 additional farmland acres will be protected.

**Outlook** American settlements were located in areas where the land was the most productive. Consequently, some of Vermont's most valuable and productive farmland is located in areas that are continually threatened by rapid development and urban sprawl. Once developed, productive farmland is lost forever. Agricultural land is being lost to development in Vermont at an alarming rate. The Champlain Valley holds some of the most productive agricultural soils, including the two largest agricultural producing counties. Much of this farmland is within an easy commute of the state's largest city and commercial center, Burlington. In other parts of the State, agricultural land is being converted by suburban sprawl and second homes. This is especially true in towns surrounding popular recreational areas such as ski areas and lakes. Suburban sprawl is now evident in Vermont as it is in much of the Nation.



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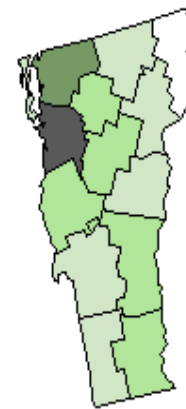
Central Vermont  
Photo by:  
Tim McCabe, NRCS

**Farmland Protection Program  
Vermont Easements  
(As of December 2001)**

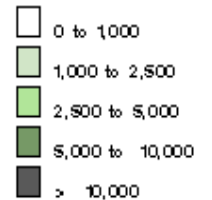
County	Acres	Easement Cost		Federal Payment \$	
		Total (\$)	Average (\$/acre)		
Addison	5,324	\$ 3,750,324	\$ 704	\$ 1,107,218	30%
Bennington	430	\$ 316,865	\$ 737	\$ 50,000	16%
Caledonia	224	\$ 159,699	\$ 713	\$ 6,496	4%
Chittenden	703	\$ 852,000	\$ 1,212	\$ 426,000	50%
Franklin	7,528	\$ 4,924,368	\$ 654	\$ 1,811,452	37%
Grand Isle	899	\$ 871,695	\$ 970	\$ 194,500	22%
Lamoille	1,849	\$ 1,133,000	\$ 613	\$ 566,500	50%
Orange	648	\$ 463,800	\$ 716	\$ 208,534	45%
Orleans	1,928	\$ 1,043,105	\$ 541	\$ 413,000	40%
Rutland	1,167	\$ 765,000	\$ 656	\$ 382,500	50%
Washington	343	\$ 363,000	\$ 1,058	\$ 181,500	50%
Windham	127	\$ 250,000	\$ 1,969	\$ 125,000	50%
Windsor	747	\$ 355,530	\$ 476	\$ 146,000	41%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,917</b>	<b>\$ 15,248,386</b>	<b>\$ 696</b>	<b>\$ 5,618,700</b>	<b>37%</b>

## Difference in Population between 1990 - 2000

Vermont

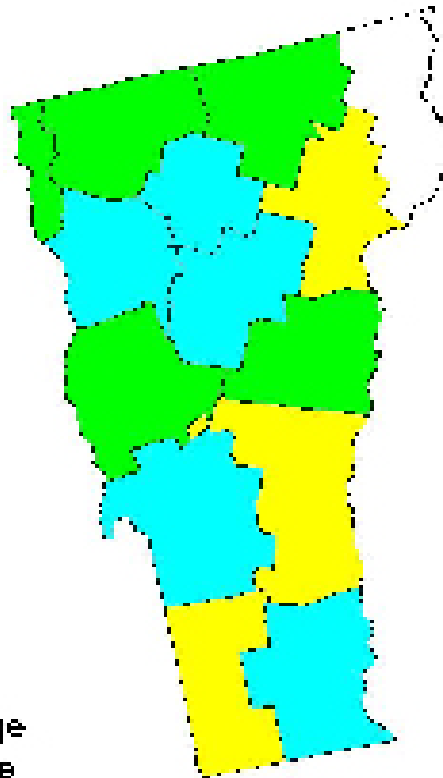


Change in Population



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population 2000

# Vermont



- Counties with acquired FPP acreage
- Counties with pending FPP acreage
- Counties with both acquired and pending FPP acreage



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resource Conservation Service

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